

## **FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Procedures for Case Acceptance**

### **1 Purpose/Scope**

These procedures apply to Friction Ridge Discipline personnel who initially receive requests for examinations. Examinations are considered to be both the processing of evidence and the comparison of prints.

### **2 Procedures**

Appropriate Friction Ridge Discipline personnel will determine if a submission meets case acceptance guidelines as listed in the FBI Laboratory Handbook of Forensic Services or FBI Laboratory policy, and communicate with relevant contacts concerning acceptance or rejection of all or a portion of a submission.

Cases may be considered “complex” when the case involves multiple items, requests for examinations, comparisons, and/or short deadlines. A case does not have to carry a major case title in order to be deemed “complex”. A Unit Chief or Supervisor may direct other employees to assist in the case examination. Although a case may be worked by multiple employees, the case will still be assigned to only one employee.

Supervisors, select Program Coordinators, and Program Managers are not routinely assigned cases, unless circumstances require the assignment.

#### **2.1 Re-examination Requests**

**2.1.1** Examinations may be conducted on previously processed evidence; however, examinations will be limited to those processes or examinations that are not affected by the previous processing. Depending on case circumstances, personnel are encouraged, but not required, to contact a contributor or other individuals on prior processing; however, any communications about the previous processing that occur must be recorded on the Communication Log.

**2.1.2** In any non-Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center case in which manual comparisons have been conducted and reported by another agency, the same exact comparisons will not be repeated. Due to the variables involved in automated searching, any unidentified prints previously searched in any automated system may be searched again. The re-examination of Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center case comparisons will adhere to Laboratory requirements for re-examinations as stated in the FBI Laboratory Handbook of Forensic Services or FBI Laboratory policy.

**2.1.2.1** A Friction Ridge Discipline examiner may re-examine a previous FBI examiner's work if the re-examination meets the needs of the unit or the case. Examples of this are when an examiner is asked to testify in a case in which a former examiner performed comparisons, when a corrective action requires re-examination, or when a case is re-assigned to an examiner and comparisons were conducted by another examiner.

**2.1.2.2** Any other exceptions may be granted only in writing by the Laboratory Director or the appropriate designee.

### **2.1.3 Outside Contributors**

**2.1.3.1** Examinations and/or services (e.g., automated searches) will not be conducted for laboratories or agencies that have the capability of conducting the same examinations except in cases that meet the Laboratory requirements as stated in the FBI Laboratory Handbook of Forensic Services, FBI Laboratory Policy, or when the evidence is submitted to the FBI Laboratory for forensic examinations in other units. Additionally, due to the variables involved in automated searching, any unidentified prints previously searched in any automated system may be searched again regardless of the capability of the original agency.

**2.1.3.1.1** Any other exceptions may be granted only in writing by the Laboratory Director or by the appropriate designee.

### **2.1.4 Sharing Images with Outside Agencies**

**2.1.4.1** Notifications received as a result of an identification made through sharing efforts with an outside agency may be compared without approval as described above.

## **2.2 Requirements for Submitted Non-Original Latent Evidence**

Examiners should obtain substrate information. Knowledge of the substrate is useful for the Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation process; however, not knowing the substrate does not prevent an examiner from properly conducting the process. When conducting examinations on non-original submitted latent evidence, personnel will proceed with the expectation that the information provided is a true and accurate representation of the original, unless otherwise indicated.

### **2.2.1 Digital Images of Latent Friction Ridge Prints**

All digital images submitted to the FBI Laboratory may be accepted for examination. Personnel may reject an image for examination if the file properties negatively impact the quality of the print(s) appearing in the image(s) such that the print(s) cannot be reliably analyzed. Rejection of an image because of the file properties requires supervisor approval, and disagreements will be addressed through the FBI Laboratory Operations Manual, Practices for Resolution of Scientific or Technical Disagreement and the FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Quality Assurance Manual, Procedures for Disagreements in Technical Casework. For rejected images, personnel will

communicate to the contributor what could potentially assist with future submissions (e.g., higher resolution, uncompressed file).

### **2.2.2 Digital Images of Friction Ridge Skin**

Digital images of actual friction ridge skin may be submitted for examination. In these circumstances, it is the examiner's discretion if the friction ridge skin in the image(s) possesses sufficient quality for examination. Any resulting identification(s) will follow the procedures set forth in the FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Quality Assurance Manual, Procedures for Verification and Blind Verification.

### **2.3 Requirements for Submitted Intentionally Recorded Prints (Original and Non-Original)**

Intentionally recorded prints are defined as any friction ridge print(s) collected under controlled conditions. Examples include a fingerprint card, a single inked fingerprint on a cashed check, or a set of major case prints. Examples of Friction Ridge Discipline examinations include searches of a single fingerprint from a notary book, a single fingerprint from a driver's license, or a single inked print on a cashed check. Ten print cards, fingerprint strips, and major case prints are examples of standard intentionally recorded prints. Single prints on a driver's license or in notary books are examples of non-standard intentionally recorded prints. See the Friction Ridge Discipline Operations Manual Procedures for Examining Unknown Deceased Friction Ridge Prints for submissions of unknown deceased prints.

The source (e.g., name, biographical information), if known, must be included in the case record.

Non-original intentionally recorded print(s) examples include a photocopy of a fingerprint card, a digital file of a single fingerprint on a driver's license, a digital printout of a fingerprint card, or a photocopy of a single fingerprint on a notary page.

When conducting examinations on non-original submitted intentionally recorded prints, personnel will proceed with the expectation that the information provided is a true and accurate representation of the original, unless otherwise indicated.

### **2.4 Support for the Criminal Justice Information Services Division**

Examiners providing support for the Criminal Justice Information Services Division (e.g., identity validation) will follow procedures and recording requirements established for and by the Criminal Justice Information Services Division and those relevant paragraphs of the FBI Latent Print Units Operations Manual, Standard Operating Procedures for Examining Friction Ridge Prints and the Next Generation Identification System. An initial Electronic Communication will be generated for the support request detailing the scope and pertinent details, such as result dissemination. Assignment of FBI Laboratory numbers and generation of FBI Laboratory reports are not required for such requests, and all relevant supporting records will be retained.

### 3 References

FBI Laboratory Handbook of Forensic Services. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Laboratory Operations Manual, Practices for Resolution of Scientific or Technical Disagreement. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Operations Manual, Procedures for Examining Unknown Deceased Friction Ridge Prints. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Quality Assurance Manual, Procedures for Disagreements in Technical Casework. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Quality Assurance Manual, Procedures for Verification and Blind Verification. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
8	02/07/18	Section 4 moved to FBI Latent Print Units Operations Manual, Procedures for Examining Unknown Deceased Friction Ridge Prints. Removed “designee” and slight modification of wording under Section 3. Section 3.1.2, name corrected. Section 3.1.4.1, made singular. Modified location in Section 3.3. Section 3.3.1, added example.
9	04/17/20	Latent Print Units changed to Friction Ridge Discipline throughout document as well as other appropriate changes with similar terms. Minor wording, grammar, and punctuation changes in document. Section 1 removed, Section 2 renamed and all sections renumbered. Section 2, removed first paragraph and clarified affected individuals in last paragraph. Added clarification in Section 2.1.1. Added clarification on automated and manual searches in Section 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.1. Section 2.2, removed the information on substrate. Removed blind verification requirement from Section 2.2.2. Added standard and non-standard descriptions to Section 2.3. Section 2.3.1 became Section 2.4 and content generalized to address multiple situations.

**Approval**

Redacted - Signatures on File

Friction Ridge Discipline  
Technical Leader

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Date: 04/16/2020Latent Print Operations  
Unit Chief

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Date: 04/16/2020Acting Latent Print Support  
Unit Chief

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Date: 04/16/2020Acting Scientific and Biometrics  
Analysis Unit Chief

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Date: 04/16/2020**QA Approval**

Quality Manager

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Date: 04/16/2020